Original Works by the Playwriting Class of 2015
These plays make me excited for the future of the theatre. In the range of their content, form, and cultural origins, as well as their vivid ambition, they capture the exhilarating diversity of our nation and world today.

Each of these playwrights chose a favorite artist to help guide them through the development and production process. From Ken Rus Schmoll to Tracy Letts, Lisa D’Amour, Sarah Ruhl, Keng Sen Ong, and beyond, each of these mentors stands at the forefront of our field. We are deeply grateful for the generous gift of their time and expertise.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to Professor Chuck Mee, who years ago recognized the critical importance of giving Columbia MFA playwrights an opportunity to see their works fully staged, and to collaborate with a renowned mentor, the way young artists a few centuries ago got to work in the studio with Giotto or Leonardo da Vinci or Michelangelo.

Welcome to the future. We hope you enjoy these bold, moving, and energetic new works by the next generation of playwrights.

DAVID HENRY HWANG, Head of Playwriting

Columbia University School of the Arts

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*New Plays Now* is made possible with the generous donations of The JTS Fund, The Katherine and Gilbert Miller Fund, and The Howard Stein New Play Fund. All images of the playwrights by Jörg Meyer.
**John 8**

TABIA LAU

April 16, 3pm; April 18, 7:30pm; April 19, 2:30pm

Originally from Montréal, TABIA LAU has developed pieces of work as a playwright, producer, literary manager, book writer and production manager. Her commissioned musicals have made her a two-time Toronto Fringe Festival Patron’s Pick Award winner, and her plays have been produced throughout both the United States and Canada. Stories that move her span topics of family ties, sexuality, duty, faith, loneliness, loss, and love.

Mentor: Sarah Ruhl

John 8 is an exploration of madness in the mundane. In the near future that curiously resembles today, five people check into work each morning, alienated from one another by written rules, confident that today will be like any other. Their tasks are simple, almost mindless, and as their days drag on, impatience and boredom begin to take their toll. For hidden from them under layers of bureaucracy and classified information above everybody’s paygrades is an experimental program much more sinister, working as diligently as them, for the greater good. John 8 is a play about unquestionable authority and collateral damage in a faded grey, nondescript downtown building.

ABOVE: Select Sections (2013), with Anna Dart and Tara Pacheco. Photo by Joe Li.

**Artaud Artaud**

MATT MINNICINO

April 17, 3pm & 8pm; April 18, 2:30pm

Antonin Artaud is Famous (ish). He’s written Books (a few). He’s changed The Face of Theatre (mostly). Recently, though, he hasn’t been quite himself. Join Monsieur Artaud, along with His Double, His Hapless Doctors, and a Madcap Chorus of characters real and imagined, on a cruel expedition into the darkrooms of the mortal mind. Help him seek truth, shatter illusions, become God, enjoy Chekhov (or die trying), and find a cure for the worst disease of all: being an artist.


MATT MINNICINO is a playwright, actor, teacher, and other things. His words have been heard at (among others): The Flea, HERE Arts, Dixon Place, Alchemical Theatre Lab, The Gibson Showroom, The Bushwick Starr, The Cell, and in several universities on the East Coast. He is a member/editorial assistant at The Dramatists Guild, a resident playwright for Brooklyn’s Exquisite Corpse Company, a curator for Mad/Ecstatic Collective, and an educator with the American Shakespeare Center’s Young Company.

www.mattminnicino.com

Mentor: Jenny Schwartz
Happily After Ever
LAURA ZLATOS
April 21, 8pm; April 22, 2:30pm; April 26, 8pm

Newlyweds Darren and Janet want nothing more than to build the perfect life together. With matching hand towels, quirky neighbors and a love that beats everyone else’s, they are easily the happiest couple on the block. But when Janet gives birth to a baby with both male and female genitalia, their artificially ideal world crashes, falls apart and all the other words that basically mean the same thing. Can Darren and Janet live happily after ever? Can they figure out what to do about their child? And can they overcome the odds and finally win a game of charades?

LAURA ZLATOS is a Brooklyn-based playwright. She graduated from New York University, where she studied Dramatic Writing and Gender and Sexuality Studies. Her plays have been produced by the Exquisite Corpse Company, Riant Theatre, and Variations Theatre Group. She is currently a playwright-in-residence at the Exquisite Corpse Company. Upcoming works include a devised play about photographer Francesca Woodman, produced by Next in Line Productions.

Mentor: David Henry Hwang

Scrapland
HANNAH BISEWSKI
April 23, 2:30pm; April 25, 7:30pm; April 26, 2:30pm

A family struggles to remain standing after the loss of its patriarch, while disaster stalks them from beyond their home. Neither here nor there, Scrapland is a place torn to shreds by a violence that erupts from the inside, seeps from the outside, marks an era, and offers no explanation.

HANNAH BISEWSKI is a graduate of University of Texas at Austin, where she studied translation as well as a number of writing forms. As an artist, her work has always experimented with form. She will graduate with her MFA in the spring of 2015, after which she intends to continue writing for theatre, film, and television media, with a focus on experimentation in form and integrating original storytelling into mainstream entertainment culture, by way of accessible outlets such as television and independent film.

Mentor: Lisa D’Amour


**La Paloma Prisoner**

**RAQUEL ALMAZAN**

April 24, 2:30pm & 8pm; April 25, 2:30pm

*La Paloma Prisoner* is a multi-disciplinary play about the reclamation of identity by incarcerated women in the Colombian prison system. A killer, nicknamed La Paloma, targets men who rape girls: during her incarceration, male rapists throughout Colombia continue to turn up dead, leading the public to believe she may have magical avenger abilities. Based on the true story of a group of female inmates selected every year as beauty queen contestants at the Buen Pastor prison in Bogotá, this new play interweaves the ritualistic journey of a “parade of prisoners” with Colombia’s social, political, and spiritual history. La Paloma begins to revolutionize not only the women’s lives, but prison society and the world beyond its walls.

**RAQUEL ALMAZAN** has worked as an actor, writer and director in professional theatre/film/television productions. Her eclectic career as artist-activist spans original multi-media solo performances, playwriting, new work development, and dramaturgy. She is a practitioner of Butoh Dance and a creator/teacher of arts programs for youth/adults. Her work has been featured in New York City, including Off-Broadway, throughout the United States and internationally in Greece, Italy, Colombia, Guatemala and Sweden, including several of her plays within her lifelong project of writing bilingual plays in dedication to each Latin American country (Latin Is America play cycle).

**Mentor:** Chay Yew

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**The Hag, the Slag and the Scarlett Faery**

**LISA DOUGLAS**

April 30, 2:30pm; May 2, 7:30pm; May 3, 2:30pm

*The Hag, the Slag and the Scarlett Faery centers around Callie. As the only daughter of socially conscious parents, Callie has been sheltered and protected her whole life. This isolated upbringing has left Callie a naïve and painfully introverted young woman. In spite of her innocence and social awkwardness, she manages to marry the man of her dreams—the dashing airline captain, Nicholas. But as their relationship deepens from love at first sight to the daily rigors of marriage, Callie becomes haunted by her past and her ever-growing insecurities. Dark and dangerous secrets threatens to tear them apart. In a world where everything is an illusion, how can anything be real?*

**LISA DOUGLAS,** an American playwright, was born and raised in East Hartford, CT. She attended the University of Connecticut (Storrs), garnering a BA in English, with a concentration in Creative Writing, and a BA in Theater Studies. Since then, she has written and staged the 2014 production of *The Sun, the Moon and the Stars*, and explored the complicated relationships between parents, mentors, and children. *The Hag, the Slag and the Scarlett Faery* will be her second production at Columbia. She graduates this May.

**Mentor:** Kia Corthron

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**S/K**

**TINGYING MA**

May 1, 2:30pm & 8pm; May 2, 2:30pm

S/K is a play about a trapped horse. S/K is an ancient brocade technology and a real loom. S/K is a bloody butcher who could not forget his dead horse, a digital female voice, a human-sized puppet and gallows. S/K is made of wood, bamboo, blood, bones, hemp. S/K interrogates our cultural DNA and asks who we really are. Is it true that what we inherit from the past is what suffocates us in the present? Are we the product of this cultural machine, or is this machine the product of us? Are we repeating the same pattern year after year? Should we break this machine, free the horse and end it all?

**Mentor:** Keng Sen Ong

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**In Rooms Such as These**

**DIANNE NORA**

May 6, 2:30pm; May 8, 8pm; May 9, 2:30pm

In Rooms Such as These is a dark comedy about fucking and fucking-up. When Maggie suddenly finds herself without an apartment in New York City, she crashes from room to room, testing the realities of friendship, relationships, and having a room of one’s own. In Rooms Such as These casts a harsh light on the economic realities facing a generation of young Americans.

**Mentor:** Tracy Letts

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**TINGYING MA** (playwright/director) is a bilingual playwright graduating from Columbia University in 2015. Major productions include Birds (2011); Nanny’s Umbrella (2012); Excision (2012); and Alphabetical (2013). She previously graduated from Central Academy of Drama in Beijing, China with a BA in Dramatic Literature. In 2010, Tingying produced a thirty-minute documentary, Hua Hua. S/K will be her first trilogy dealing with ancient technology in China. Following S/K will be another exploration piece on Chinese ancient astrology.

**Mentor:** Tracy Letts

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**DIANNE NORA** is a playwright, performer, and theatre scholar from Chicago. Dianne’s original comedy, Wasps, was a semi-finalist for the Eugene O’Neill Theater Center National Playwrights Conference in 2014. Other plays include Everybody’s Legs, Casual, REPAIR (co-writer), Sirens (co-writer), Revolver, and Western Country. She has presented original research on contemporary American and Irish theatre in Ireland and Germany. Dianne has a BA from NYU in Dramatic Literature and Creative Writing and an MPhil in Theatre and Performance from Trinity College Dublin.

**Mentor:** Tracy Letts

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**ABOVE:** Alphabetical (2014) with Andrew Whipple. Photo by Misha Shields.

**ABOVE:** Wasps (2013) with Matthew Minnicino, Adam Weppler, Hannah Wolff, Evelyn Spahr. Photo by Keith Michael Pinault.
Inspired by a selection of Chris Ofili's paintings, *Rum for Sale* follows C. Max Tate, and his wife, Nikki, to Port of Spain, Trinidad. Max believes he is to take over The Lime Bar and Distillery his grandfather left him. But oopsie-daisy, the property was actually left to the other grandson, C. Aufidius Tate. So there was some sloppy record keeping and of course, neither Tate is willing to give up easily. Where rum is involved, yes, there are often battle lines to draw, heartbreak and despair, but oh it’s nothing but sweet paradise going down.

**DAAIMAH MUBASHSHIR** is a NYC playwright mentored by Ken Rus Schmoll. Her plays have been seen at Fire This Time Festival, Manhattan Rep. Theatre, The PlayRise Festival and a number of theatres in Chicago. Daaimah has also played the role of Assistant Director on Soho Rep. & PlayCo’s generations by debbie tucker green and New York Theatre Workshop’s The Invisible Hand by Ayad Akhtar.

www.daaimahmubashshir.com

**Mentor: Ken Rus Schmoll**

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**Rum for Sale**

**DAAIMAH MUBASHSHIR**

May 7, 2:30pm & 8pm; May 9, 7:30pm

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**CALENDAR**
ABOUT THE PROGRAM AND COLUMBIA STAGES

The MFA Theatre Program at Columbia University School of the Arts is international, collaborative and interdisciplinary. Named in honor of Oscar Hammerstein II, it is defined by its location in New York City, a global capital of theatre, and by the extensive network of Columbia alumni who run prestigious Broadway, Off-Broadway and regional theatres; direct and perform in Tony- and other award-winning productions; work in every level of the professional theatre world; and teach, mentor and engage with students on an ongoing basis. Taught by a faculty of internationally renowned creators, practitioners, producers and scholars, the Program provides students with the foundation for a career in professional theatre, with programs in Acting, Directing, Playwriting, Dramaturgy, Stage Management, and Theatre Management & Producing. Columbia Stages is the producing arm of the Oscar Hammerstein II Center for Theatre Studies.

ABOUT THE SCHOOL OF THE ARTS

Columbia University School of the Arts awards the Master of Fine Arts degree in Film, Theatre, Visual Arts and Writing and the Master of Arts degree in Film studies, and offers an interdisciplinary program in Sound Arts. The School is a thriving, diverse community of artists from around the world with talent, vision and commitment. The faculty is composed of acclaimed and internationally renowned artists, film and theatre directors, writers of poetry, writers of fiction and nonfiction, playwrights, producers, critics and scholars. Every year the School of the Arts presents exciting and innovative programs for the public including performances, exhibitions, screenings, symposia, a film festival, and numerous lectures, readings, panel discussions and talks with artists, writers, critics and scholars. The year 2015 marks the 50th anniversary of the establishment of the School at Columbia. For more information visit arts.columbia.edu.

ABOUT NEW PLAYS NOW

New Plays Now is the annual presentation of new plays by emerging artists from the MFA Theatre Program at Columbia University School of the Arts—a laboratory for students’ dramatic experimentation and a glimpse of what’s next for theatre-goers.

CONTACT INFO

Performances are held at The Pershing Square Signature Center, 480 West 42nd Street, New York, NY, and are free and open to the public.

You will find up-to-date information and may make reservations for all events at columbiastages.org, or email newplays@columbiastages.org.

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